

I have already thrown this poem away

BUFF WHITMAN-BRADLEY

I have already thrown this poem away
It's crumpled up in a ball
In the bottom of the wastebasket underneath my desk
You wouldn't have liked it

I showed it to the man at the hardware store
Who sold me a bag of nails
He felt the helicopter metaphor was too abstruse
And thought I should put a hammer in the second stanza

The woman who cuts my hair
Was put off by the iguana on the dining room table
And said the description of group sex was gratuitous
She also told me the poem hovered dangerously close
To the border between genuine feeling and cheap sentimentality
And in some places actually crossed over the line

After re-reading it a few times
I couldn't help agreeing with both of them
And I decided to toss it out
If I had a dime for every poem
I've sweated blood over then scrapped in umpteen years
Well let's put it this way
I wouldn't have to mow lawns for money to buy a ream of paper

To be honest I haven't given up on the poem entirely
I'm working on new draft right now
The helicopter the iguana and the sex are gone
There will be a crow in this version
And one or two bare trees
And a man slowly retracing his steps across a snowy field
Looking for the hammer he dropped